Dataset Documentation

Recorded Flood Outlines

April 2022

This document will help you understand and use Recorded Flood Outlines.

Dataset description

This dataset is a GIS layer which shows all our verified records of historic flooding from rivers, the sea, groundwater and surface water. Each individual Recorded Flood Outline contains a consistent list of information about the recorded flood.

In April 2020 we introduced data quality flags to denote the confidence we have in an outline; this data may not be available for outlines recorded before that date.

Update frequency

We aim to update our database containing Recorded Flood Outlines as soon as we can following a flood, but it often takes a number of months to gather all the data, verify it, record the outline, and also if appropriate, include it in the Historic Flood Map.

We release the whole dataset quarterly but only update it in locations where new information is available.

This year's planned publication dates* are:

- 28th April 2022
- 3rd August 2022
- 2nd November 2022
- 8th February 2023

*please note that these dates are subject to change

Related datasets

Other datasets you may want to use to get a more complete picture of national flood risk include:

1. Historic Flood Map
2. Flood Map for Planning (Rivers and Sea) Flood Zone 2
3. Flood Map for Planning (Rivers and Sea) Flood Zone 3
4. Flood Map for Planning (Rivers and Sea) Areas benefiting from defences
5. Flood Map for Planning (Rivers and Sea) Flood Storage Areas
6. Risk of Flooding for Rivers and Sea datasets
7. Risk of Flooding from Surface Water datasets

Common questions & known issues

- Recorded Flood Outlines do not show a record of all past flooding; there may be events where we cannot verify the evidence or we have no record.
- Recorded Flood Outlines show flooding to the land and do not necessarily indicate that properties within the historic flood extents were flooded internally.
- Recorded Flood Outlines are not suitable for identifying if an individual property will flood.

- The pattern of flooding in the area may have changed so this may now flood or not flood under different circumstances.
- Recorded Flood Outlines take into account the presence of defences, structures, and other infrastructure where they existed at the time of flooding. These may have changed.
- In some instances the record of a flood is a circle indicating that we hold a record of flooding in that area, but do not have sufficient information to allow an outline of the flood to be recorded.
- Where the date/s of flooding are unknown, but a flood record exists, the date of flooding is often given as 2050. We are working to quality assure and improve this dataset to remove these instances, where possible, but this is a work in progress and errors may still appear.
- A subset of this dataset forms the Historic Flood Map, which shows Recorded Flood Outlines that meet a set criteria. These outlines are combined to illustrate the maximum extent of any recorded flooding from rivers, the sea and groundwater only. The majority of these records began in 1946 when predecessor bodies to the Environment Agency started collecting detailed information about flooding incidents, although we hold limited details about flooding incidents prior to this date. To find out if you are in an area at risk of flooding, please go to gov.uk to complete a search.

Note: We do our best to avoid quality problems but this dataset reflects the data we hold. Our datasets may contain errors.

Dataset content

From 2020 the fields of this dataset have changed. The table below maps the pre 2020 fields to the new fields where possible. Some new fields may not be populated for all outlines.

- The pre 2020 flood source field, FLOOD_SRC, contained a mix of data source and data provider. Post 2020 these values are split between the flood source and data provider, DATA_PROV, fields.

Pre 2020 Field Name	Post 2020 Field Name	Description
OUTLINE_CO	REC_OUT_ID	Unique code identifying the flood event outline within the flood event group.
EVENT_CO	REC_GRP_ID	Unique parent code denoting which flood event group the outline is within.
NAME	NAME	Name of the flood event outline e.g. October 2000 Floods on the Severn at Shrewsbury.
START_DATE	START_DATE	Start date of flooding.
END_DATE	END_DATE	End date of flooding.
FLOOD_SRC	FLOOD_SRC	The source of the flooding from a list, including main river, ordinary watercourse, sewer, sea etc.
FLOOD_CAUS	FLOOD_CAUS	The cause of the flooding from a list, including groundwater/high water table, local drainage/surface water etc.
n/a	FM_STATUS	Indicates if the flood event outline is to be included in the flood map.
HFM_IND	HFM_STATUS	Indicates indicating if the flood event outline is to be included in the historic flood map.
BNDRY_SRC	DATA_SRC	Source of information for boundary of flood outline, aerial photography, SURVEY, LIDAR etc.
FLUVIAL_IN	FLUVIAL_F	Boolean flag indicating if source of flooding was fluvial.
COASTAL_IND	COASTAL_F	Boolean flag indicating if source of flooding was coastal.
TIDAL_IND	TIDAL_F	Boolean flag indicating if source of flooding was tidal.
n/a	DATA_PROV	Provider of data used to create the flood event outline, including Local Authority, Environment Agency etc.
n/a	DATA_QUAL	Indicates the quality of the flood event outline.